

Subject: Submission for the Sex Industry Bill 2019.

Attention: Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee to the Legislative Assembly of the NT

From: Stella Night, private escort currently based in Hobart, Tasmania.

[REDACTED]

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you with my submission to the Economic Policy Scrutiny Committee to the Legislative Assembly of the NT, regarding the Sex Industry Bill 2019 the Attorney General has introduced the to parliament on the 18th of September. For safety reasons, I have chosen to write this submission under my work alias.

As I sex worker, I felt compelled to make a submission to the committee as sex work legislation is directly linked to my health and safety as a worker. When the legislation is evidence based and has consulted with and listened to the people most affected by the legislation, in this case being sex workers, I can work safely within the law, with equal access to support, health, safety and justice. NSW, with full decriminalisation is currently the only state whose legislation provides this level of protection and equal rights to sex workers.

I was raised in the Northern Territory, and I still proudly consider myself to be a Territorian, though I don't currently live there. I want to see the Northern Territory pass legislation that will provide the highest level of health, safety and rights outcomes possible to all sex workers, this includes migrant and street based sex workers. I have seen first-hand how laws that don't extend the same rights to all workers, effectively push those sections of our industry underground, away from support and services.

I support the passing of the Sex Industry Bill 2019 with amendments removing the unnecessary advertising restrictions clauses that have been carried across from the Prostitutions Regulations Act 1992. These restrictions are outdated, seem to be based on nothing more than a belief that sex work is somehow wrong or bad and are simply unworkable and create safety issues for sex workers. They do nothing to increase sex worker safety and actively increase danger to sex workers, so they must be removed. To work safely, we need to be able to clearly advertise and negotiate our services in advance with our clients so there is no confusion, as this is when problems with clients can arise. We need to be able to clearly describe and agree on a service before the client is in the room alone with us. Any advertising restriction that hinders our ability to clearly advertise our service in advance puts us at risk. Requiring us to take bookings from a different location to where the service is provided is simply an unrealistic logistical nightmare, what would your work day look like if you were forced to read emails in one building and go to another building to answer them? I can see no justification for this other than a discriminatory attempt to 'punish' workers by placing a totally unnecessary logistical burden on our businesses.

The clause regarding to 'Suitability Certificates' also needs removing, sex industry businesses do not need singling out for 'special' or 'extra' regulation than other businesses. I am concerned this process feeds into the harmful stigma and negative stereotypes about the industry that increase danger to workers in it and could preclude sex workers who have previously been charged with sex work related offenses under the current or previous legislation from being sex industry business

owners and operators. In my experience, people who have worked as sex workers themselves often run the best businesses that support their workers.

Ultimately though I support full decriminalisation of sex work and the Sex Industry Bill 2019 because it is the only model of legislation that is evidence based. As a sex worker who has worked across several jurisdictions in Australia and therefore under several legislative models including licensing models, criminalisation and decriminalisation, to me it is very clear which model protects my health, rights and safety. Though I believe that as a citizen and a worker directly affected by this legislation you should listen to my experience of how this stands to affect me, there is also an overwhelming amount of global research and support for full Decriminalisation as the best model legislation to reduce STI's (or in the context of Australia, to maintain the consistently lower rates of STI's sex workers have than the general population), reduce mistreatment of sex workers and increase our access to human rights, including health care. Decriminalisation is supported by the United Nations, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNDP, Amnesty International, International Labor Office (ILO), World Health Organisation, Lancet Medical Journal, Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women, Global Network of Sex Work Projects, Asia Pacific Network of Sex Workers, and within Australia's National BBV and STI Strategies. Ultimately, public policy should be evidence based and Decriminalisation is very clearly what the evidence is saying. How much more evidence could you possibly need to make a clear, evidence based decision?

I do not want my right to workplace health and safety to be a political, moral or religious battleground, this is my life. Rights are not pie, increasing rights for sex workers does not decrease rights for others. Those that oppose this bill will still have the same rights as before to choose to not work in the sex industry, run sex industry businesses or engage services from sex workers. It will literally not affect their lives at all, whereas the difference it will make to me and my fellow sex workers can literally mean the difference between life and death, as we gain the right to work legally, safely and with full access to support and justice.

Yours Sincerely,

Stella Night,

Private Escort